

## **Introduction**

- You and I are among 280 million people who live in America. Regardless of our age, our race, our religion, our income, or our political affiliation, we have one thing in common. All 280 million of us depend on transportation to live.
- And I want to be clear. When I say “transportation,” I’m not talking about cars and trucks on the highway – I’m not talking about VDOT – I’m talking about mobility and accessibility.
- We are no longer investing in transportation. I don’t think people realize how serious this situation is.
- Investments for new projects – roads and public transportation – are dwindling away, while people continue to buy more cars, drive more miles and make more trips.
- As transportation professionals, somehow we have failed to make the critical link between transportation and people when communicating the crisis we are in.

- We get caught up in average daily traffic volumes, levels of service and geometric deficiencies – things that mean something to us but miss the connection to people. Somehow we've missed the big picture entirely.
- Let's look at transportation from a different angle, not a technical angle, but from a people point of view.

**Think about health care and its connection to transportation**

- Faster Emergency Response saves lives. In over 50% of the cases when cardiac death occurs, it occurs before the patient reaches the hospital.
- Rural airports have been credited with making lifesaving health care accessible for smaller towns, where 20 years ago, the mortality rate for heart attack patients was 20 percent. Today that rate is 5 percent.

- What if medical care isn't accessible? States have poured enormous resources into health insurance for uninsured children, but the Children's Health Fund reports that between 3.5 and 4 million children miss essential doctors' appointments due to a lack of transportation.
- As a result, children with manageable chronic illnesses such as asthma get sick more often, and children who need critical follow-up care after surgery on a major illness cannot get it.
- Nearly 50 million Americans are disabled and many do not have access to transportation. Over a half-million are completely homebound for the primary reason that they can't get the transportation they need.
- The number of older Americans will more than double in the year 2030.
- Seniors in the future will be even more dependent on transportation than today's elderly.

- In 2030, there will be more than 3.5 times as many drivers 85 years and older on the roads. This group has the highest driver fatality rate of any age group on a per-mile driven basis.
- A report from the Brookings Institute says, “All but the most fortunate of seniors will confront an array of medical and other constraints on their mobility.”

### **Think about education and its connection to transportation**

- Education is not just for the future. It’s part of our daily lives right now, with about 1 in 4 of us over the age of 3 enrolled in school.
- Accessibility to education is important for these nearly 80 million students enrolled in schools across the country.
- In Virginia alone, every day, almost 900,000 children are transported to and from schools and on field trips using nearly 14,000 school buses across the state.

**Think about the economy and jobs and their connection to transportation**

- According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, every \$1 billion in transportation investments creates 47,500 jobs.
- A recent study shows that from 1986 through 1996, commuter rail services in the United States increased employment by 420,000 jobs and increased tax revenue by \$3.5 billion.
- But still, we face the fact that about 91% of the 128 million workers in America go to work in a car.
- The lack of reliable transportation is one of the leading barriers to employment of 33 million people who live in poverty across the country.
- Research on welfare recipients in Cleveland showed that the ability to commute by car provided access to roughly six times as many job opportunities as commuting by public transportation.

- More than one-third of America's population lives outside urbanized areas. Nearly 40 percent of rural residents live in communities with no public transportation.

**Think of the environment and its positive connection with transportation**

- In the last seven years, state DOT's created more than 36,000 acreage of wetlands for a net gain of more than 22,000. VDOT has created more than 800 acres since 1978.
- Transportation is the largest source of funds for historic preservation and archaeology.
- In Virginia, approximately \$60 million has gone to over 250 projects related to historic preservation.
- Over the past ten years, VDOT has undertaken major excavations on approx. 50 important archaeological sites.
- VDOT has recorded approx. 40,000 historic resources – that is more than any other state agency or private organization.

**Think of your time and its connection with transportation**

- If you drive in Northern Virginia, you lose 72 hours of your life - or an equivalent of nine working days - stuck in traffic a year. That's up from 21 hours in 1982
- You lose 28 hours of your life if you drive in Virginia Beach. Three and half working days. That's up from 12 hours in 1982.
- And you lose nearly 16 hours – or 2 working days - to traffic congestion if you drive in Richmond. That's up from 4 hours in 1982.
- Time matters when you consider:
  - Nearly 70% of employed parents say they don't have enough time with their children.
  - 63% working parents say they don't have enough time to spend with their spouses.
  - 55% of working parents say they don't have enough time for themselves.

- The amount of traffic experiencing congestion in peak travel periods has doubled from 33 percent in 1982 to 67 percent in 2001.
- In the U.S. the annual cost of traffic congestion ballooned from \$14 billion to more than \$63 billion since 1982, wasting nearly 6 billion gallons of fuel due to congestion.
- Couldn't we do something better with \$63 billion?

**Think of the impact transportation has on one family - a real family**

**I know**

- For one working mother, transportation means opportunity to take her son to a special school so he can learn to read. Without transportation, her son may never read a book on his own.
- For her sister who is disabled and homebound, transportation means survival. Her food, clothes and medical care depend on it. Without transportation, she would have to move from her home and depend on others for her care.



- For her 82-year-old mother, transportation means freedom to visit her children. Without transportation, she would be isolated.

Health care

Education

Safe communities

Jobs

The environment – and

Families are being compromised, because we have stopped investing in transportation.

- If medical care is important to you, then so is transportation.
- If education is important to you, then so is transportation.
- If having a job is important to you, then so is transportation.
- If living in a safe community is important to you, then so is transportation.
- If the environment is important to you, then so is transportation.
- If spending time with your family is important to you, then so is transportation.

## **Close**

- If you happen to have a child born in 1986, they're 18 now - out of high school and ready for college.
- You've invested several times in their health. You've invested in their education and are about to invest more.
- But we have not invested in the connecting link to their future – transportation. We have a duty to do better.
- Take this message to:
  - Schools
  - PTA's
  - Emergency medical techs
  - Law enforcement
  - Fire response teams
  - To people in your communities
- Build a groundswell of consensus to invest in transportation.
- And do it now!